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## Venezuela: ITUC Criticises US “National Security” Decision

Brussels, 10 March 2015 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has strongly criticised a US decision to declare Venezuela a “risk to national security and foreign policy”, as diplomatic relations between the two countries deteriorate further.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said, “The US faces real threats to national security on many fronts and from within many countries, but there’s no evidence that Venezuela is one of them. Allegations of human rights abuses and corruption made by the US against seven Venezuelan officials should be dealt with according to the rule of law, and not trial by media. We urge both the US and Venezuela to accept the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court on Human Rights which was established for just this kind of situation. They should also respect the role of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.”

UNASUR, the regional government grouping, has been trying to re-start dialogue between the Venezuelan government and opposition, with allegations of opposition efforts to mount a coup and counter-criticism of the government’s crackdown on the opposition dominating Venezuelan politics in recent months.

During a visit to Caracas last week, UNASUR Secretary General Ernesto Samper was reported as saying "With the evidence of U.S. meddling presented us by President Maduro, we want to emphasize that all UNASUR nations, without exception, reject any attempts, either internal or from abroad, to destabilize Venezuela's democracy. With the upcoming parliamentary elections in Venezuela, we believe it is the best scenario for both political forces to express their political differences and sort out the controversies."

Víctor Báez, General Secretary of the ITUC Regional Organisation for the Americas, TUCA, said, “Sanctions from outside will not solve the internal problem in the country and will contribute to worsening it. The way out of the problem will be through dialogue and respect of the democratically elected authorities.”

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 328 national affiliates.

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